

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of messaging comprising the steps of:
 - maintaining a database of records, each record comprising attributes of an individual and an identifier of said individual;
 - receiving at least one input attribute from a user;
 - retrieving at least one record from the database in accordance with at least one input attribute;
 - identifying an individual corresponding to each selected record;
 - rendering at least one avatar using attributes comprised in the at least one selected record;
 - selecting a rendered avatar; and
 - sending a message to the identified individual.
2. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 1 comprising the additional step of rendering an avatar in response to the input attributes.
3. (Currently Amended) A method of messaging comprising the steps ~~pf~~of:

- maintaining a database of records, each record comprising attributes of an individual and an identifier of said individual;

- receiving at least one input attribute from a user; - rendering an avatar responsive to the input attributes; - retrieving at least one record from the database in accordance with at least one input attribute; and

- identifying an individual corresponding to each retrieved record; - sending a message to the identified individual.

4. (Original) The method as claimed in Claim 3 comprising the additional step of rendering at least one avatar using attributes comprised in the selected records.

5. (Original) The method as claimed in Claim 4 comprising the additional step of selecting at least one of the rendered avatars.

6. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 1 ~~or Claim 5~~, wherein the step of selecting at least one of the rendered avatars is in response to a selection input by the user.

7. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~any preceding Claim 1~~, comprising the additional step of receiving the message from the user.

8. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~any preceding Claim 1,~~ comprising the additional step of verifying that a status of a user is such that the user is not blocked from sending a message to an identified individual.
9. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~any preceding Claim 1,~~ comprising the additional step of determining whether a user has been assigned a status of disallowed sender to an identified individual, and preventing the rendering of an avatar corresponding to that identified individual.
10. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 8, ~~or Claim 9~~ wherein the step of determining a status of the user is dependent on the identity of the user and the identity of the individual.
11. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 9, ~~or Claim 10~~ wherein the status of the individual is determined using the database.
12. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 9, ~~or Claim 10~~ comprising the steps of storing an identifier associated with a selected record, and determining the status of the individual using the associated identifier.

13. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in ~~any preceding~~ Claim 1, wherein the input attributes comprise attributes relating to a location of an individual.

14. (Original) A system for messaging comprising:

- a storage means for storing a plurality of records, each record comprising attributes of an individual and an identifier of said individual;
- an avatar rendering and selection means for rendering an avatar using attributes stored in the storage means, and selecting a rendered avatar ; and
- a messaging means, for identifying an individual corresponding to the selected rendered avatar, and sending a message to the identified individual.

15. (Original) The system as claimed in Claim 14 further comprising a display for displaying a rendered avatar to the user.

16. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in Claim 14, ~~or Claim 15~~ wherein the avatar rendering and selection means is adapted to receive attributes input by a user for matching and retrieving data in the storage means and render an avatar responsive to said input attributes.

17. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in ~~any of Claims 14 to 16~~ Claim 14, wherein the avatar rendering and selection means is adapted to match input attributes with records in the database and retrieve matched records.

18. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in ~~any of Claims 14 to 17~~ Claim 14, wherein the input attributes relate to the location of an individual.

19. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in ~~any of Claims 14 to 18~~ Claim 14, wherein the input attributes include details of an individual's physical appearance.

20. (Original) The system as claimed in Claim 19 wherein the details of the individual's physical appearance are selected from a list of head shapes, eye colours, eyelid states, mouth types, hairstyles, hair colours, skin colours, breast size, belly size and clothing.

21. (Original) The system as claimed in Claim 20 wherein the clothing is selected from a list comprising: top style, top colour, bottom style, bottom colour, shoe type and shoe colour.

22. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in ~~any of Claims 14 to 21~~ Claim 14, wherein the attributes of an individual include details of the individual's behaviour.

23. (Original) The system as claimed in Claim 22 wherein the details of the individual's behaviour are selected from a list comprising: smoking preference, drink preference, musical preference, and interests.

24. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in ~~any of Claims 14 to 23~~ Claim 14, wherein the avatar rendering and selection means is further adapted to verify that a status of a user is such that the user is not blocked from sending a message to an identified individual.
25. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in ~~any of Claims 14 to 23~~ Claim 14, wherein the avatar rendering and selection means is further adapted to determine whether a user has been assigned a status of disallowed sender to an identified individual, and prevent the rendering of an avatar corresponding to that identified individual.
26. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in ~~any of Claims 14 to 25~~ Claim 14, wherein the avatar rendering and selection means is further adapted to determine the status of the individual using the database.
27. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in ~~any of Claims 14 to 26~~ Claim 14, wherein the avatar rendering and selection means is adapted to store an identifier associated with a selected record, and the status of the individual is determined using the associated identifier.
28. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in ~~any of Claims 14 to 27 wherein the inputting of attributes is performed using~~ Claim 14, further comprising a graphical user

interface that includes an output rendered avatar which is configured to input attributes to the storage means.

29. (Currently Amended) A method of capturing attributes of individuals comprising the steps of:

- maintaining a database of records, each record comprising attributes of an individual and an identifier of an individual;
- receiving at least one input attribute from a user; and
- rendering an avatar, responsive to said input attributes.

30. (Original) The method as claimed in Claim 29, further comprising the step of storing the input attributes in the database.

31. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 29 ~~or Claim 30~~, further comprising the steps of determining an identifier of the individual and storing the identifier in the database.

32. (Currently Amended) A system for capturing attributes of individuals comprising:

- a storage means for storing a database of a plurality of records, each record comprising attributes of an individual and an identifier of said individual; and

- a character engine means for receiving input attributes of an individual and rendering an avatar, responsive to said input attributes.

33. (Original) The system as claimed in Claim 32 wherein the character engine means is adapted to store the input attributes in the database.

34. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in Claim 32, ~~or Claim 33~~ further comprising a registration means for determining an identifier of the individual and storing the identifier in the database.

35. (Currently Amended) A method of selecting individuals comprising the steps of:

- maintaining a database of records, each record comprising attributes of an individual and an identifier of said individual;
- receiving at least one input attribute from a user;
- retrieving at least one record from the database in accordance with at least one input attribute;
- rendering at least one avatar using attributes comprised in the at least one selected record; and
- selecting a rendered avatar.

36. (Original) The method as claimed in Claim 35 comprising the additional step of rendering an avatar in response to the input attributes.

37. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 35, ~~or Claim 36~~ wherein the input attributes relate to the location of a user.

38. (Currently Amended) A system of selecting individuals comprising:

- a storage means for storing a plurality of records, each record comprising attributes of an individual and an identifier of said individual; and
- an avatar rendering and selection means for rendering an avatar using attributes stored in the storage means, and selecting a rendered avatar.

39. (Original) The system as claimed in Claim 38 further comprising a character engine means for inputting attributes of an individual and rendering an avatar responsive to said attributes is adapted to input attributes for selecting data in the storage means.

40. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in Claim 38, ~~or Claim 39~~ wherein the input attributes relate to the location of an individual.

41. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in ~~any of Claims 38 to 40~~ Claim 38, wherein the input attributes include details of an individual's physical appearance.

42. (Original) The system as claimed in Claim 41 wherein the details of the individual's physical appearance are selected from a list of head shapes, eye colours, eyelid states, mouth types, hairstyles, hair colours, skin colours, breast size, belly size and clothing.

43. (Original) The system as claimed in Claim 42 wherein the clothing is selected from a list comprising: top style, top colour, bottom style, bottom colour, shoe type and shoe colour.

44. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in ~~any of Claims 38 to 43~~ Claim 38, wherein the attributes of an individual include details of the individual's behaviour.

45. (Original) The system as claimed in Claim 44 wherein the details of the individual's behaviour are selected from a list comprising: smoking preference, drink preference, musical preference, and interests.

46. (Currently Amended) The system as claimed in ~~any of Claims 38 to 45 wherein the inputting of attributes is performed~~ Claim 38, further comprising using a graphical user interface that includes an output rendered avatar which is configured to input attributes into the storage means.